

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Submitted with Amendment is a substitute specification. This substitute specification is being submitted to correct a number of typographical, grammatical and idiomatic errors in the original specification. No new matter has been introduced. Accompanying the substituted specification is a marked-up version of the specification indicating the changes that have been incorporated into the substitute specification relative to the original specification.

Appreciation is expressed to Examiner Huang for the indication that Claims 7-12, 15, 16, 18 and 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 15 has been amended to include the subject matter recited in independent Claim 14, and Claim 14 has been canceled. Also, Claim 18 has been amended to include the subject matter recited in independent Claim 17, and Claims 17 and 20 have been canceled. It is thus respectfully submitted that independent Claims 15 and 18, as well as dependent Claims 16 and 19, are allowable.

New dependent Claims 21-26 are presented in this Amendment. Thus, in addition to allowable Claims 15, 16, 18 and 19, the claims currently pending in this application include Claims 1-13 and 21-26. Of those claims, Claim 1 is the only independent claim.

The subject matter of this application pertains to a door opening/closing device for a vehicle. As set forth in independent Claim 1, the vehicle door opening/closing device comprises a door handle operated to open/close a vehicle door, a door lock mechanism for locking and unlocking the vehicle door, light-

emitting means included in the door handle and visible outside the door handle, and a control mechanism. The control mechanism recognizes the opening/closing operation of the vehicle door based upon operation of the door handle, operates the door lock mechanism to unlock the vehicle door when the opening operation of the vehicle door is recognized, operates the door lock mechanism to lock the vehicle door when the vehicle door closing operation is recognized, and controls the light-emitting means to light-emit in response to operation of the door lock mechanism.

The Official Action observes that U.S. Patent No. 6,648,493 to *Klein* discloses a vehicle door opening/closing device having features similar to those recited in independent Claim 1. *Klein* discloses a vehicle door actuating mechanism that includes a door handle 10 in which two light sources 33 are positioned at the ends 26, 27 of the curved portion 19 of the stirrup-shaped pull grip of the handle 10. As discussed in the paragraph bridging columns 3 and 4 of *Klein*, the lamps 33 produce an illumination 36 when a person approaching the vehicle to unlock the door is in possession of a data carrier having a code coinciding with the code associated with the door lock control system. This allows the person approaching the vehicle in the dark to identify the portion of the handle 10 that is to be grasped to actuate the handle.

One of the differences between the vehicle door opening/closing device at issue here and the vehicle door actuating mechanism disclosed in *Klein* pertains to the control mechanism. In addition to operating the door lock mechanism to unlock the vehicle door when the opening operation is recognized and operating the door lock mechanism to lock the vehicle door when the vehicle door closing operation is recognized, the control mechanism also controls the light-emitting means to light-

emit in response to the opening and closing operation of the vehicle door. The control mechanism thus controls the light-emitting means to light-emit in response to both the vehicle door opening operation and the vehicle door closing operation. Claim 1 has been amended to better set forth this distinction. *Klein* does not disclose such a control mechanism. Rather, Klein is only concerned with illuminating the lamps 33 when an individual approaches the vehicle to unlock the door. Further, considering that the focus of the disclosure in *Klein* is to permit an authorized person to visualize, in the dark, the location of the vehicle at which the user's hands should be placed for reliably grasping and actuating the handle, it would not have been obvious to modify the disclosed mechanism to also operate the light sources in response to the closing operation of the vehicle door.

In light of at least the foregoing differences, withdrawal of the rejection based on the disclosure contained in *Klein* is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-13 and 21-26 depend from independent Claim 1 and are thus allowable at least because they depend from an allowable independent claim.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

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By: Matthew L. Schneider
Matthew L. Schneider
Registration No. 32,814

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620